

CITY OF NORWALK PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES

APRIL 26, 2006

ATTENDANCE: Herb Grant, Chairman; Gwen Briggs; Joanne Romano; Matthew Miklave (8:25).

STAFF: Sara LeTourneau, Director of Personnel & Labor Relations.

OTHERS: Tim Callahan, Health Department Director; Police Chief Harry Rilling; Fire Chief Dennis McCarthy; Peter Scotella & Tami Hodges, EAP; Craig Shoop, Health Department; Inspector Ken Hall & Firefighter Jack O'Donnell, Fire Department.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 p.m. by the Chairman. There was not a quorum present.

DISCUSSION/ACTION CONCERNING PUBLIC SAFETY EAP PROPOSAL

The Chairman said this had been discussed previously. Recommendations were made for a more comprehensive program. He met with the chiefs of the fire and police departments and the EAP providers and a revised plan has been submitted. There will be a coordinating body.

Mr. Scotella said this will be a more comprehensive program, working with one person. They took all of the recommendations and added what the committee was looking for. There will be unlimited, flexible training.

Mrs. Briggs asked who would coordinate the program and Ms. Hodges said that would be designated by the City, with Mr. Shoop as the liaison.

The Chairman said it is imperative that Mr. Shoop be more of a full-time employee. Ms. Hodges said they would make Mr. Shoop aware of anything that happens after hours.

Ms. Romano said, with both programs integrated, there has to be a sense of privacy. The feeling that there is a lack of privacy deters people from seeking help. Statistics should not have been in the newspaper following the executive session that took place at the last meeting. Ms. Hodges said their policy is to never speak to the newspapers.

The Chairman said that was a valid point. Confidentiality is the forerunner of this program.

Mrs. Briggs asked Mr. Shoop if he would coordinate public relations; Mr. Shoop responded affirmatively. He asked if his position would be made full time. The Chairman said that was not yet on the table. Ms. Hodges said that Mr. Shoop would be involved with EAP quite a bit in the initial 90-day period but it would become less after that period.

Mrs. Romano asked if there was any talk about implementing this for city employees. The Chairman said they are looking to possibly implement this in the future if the numbers balance out. Mr. Shoop said these services are currently offered to all city employees, including Board of Education employees.

At 8:25 p.m., Mr. Miklave arrived at the meeting. There was now a quorum.

Police Chief Rilling said he appreciated the effort in putting together a program that will help police and firefighters. It will be a tremendous benefit to the police department because they will take advantage of the training of their supervisors so that they are highly cognizant of referring personnel.

Fire Chief McCarthy agreed with Chief Rilling and said training is a major part of this program. It is a critical piece of officer development. This is an augmentation of a very successful program.

Firefighter O'Donnell said that the city's employee assistance program is one of the best around. This new program involves many more sessions. Supervisory training would now require overtime. He was concerned about the cost and said that the money should be invested in their own employee assistance program, of which their coordination with Mr. Shoop is the key. He also noted that this program does not cost anything. The Chairman said they are not eliminating the existing program; this is a supplement to that program.

Ms. Hodges said that the city will still have one EAP program for the police and fire departments. Mr. Shoop is still the funnel. Any conversations are privileged and protected. There are two trainings offered a year at their North Haven facility, but there will be on-site training in Norwalk. She noted that workman's compensation only can be provided when there is a physical injury, by Connecticut law.

Mr. Miklave said he is in favor of this program.

Ms. Hodges said they would coordinate with Mr. Shoop. The Chairman said this is a comprehensive plan that dovetails with what the city is currently doing and bringing in a program for first responders, which does not now exist. EAP will have to provide ongoing marketing.

Mrs. Briggs asked if there was a way to measure the effectiveness of this program. Ms. Hodges said everyone who agrees to receive mail from EAP is surveyed, and those results are tracked. Mr. Shoop will also comment on this program. If an employee signs a release, contact compliance and completion only will be given to the supervisor. The

Chairman said, from a management standpoint, if an employee performance has deteriorated, they can make a direct referral. Other than telling that an employee is participating or not participating, there is no discussion.

It was agreed that committee members could audit one of the training sessions.

** MRS. ROMANO MOVED TO RECOMMEND THE EAP PROGRAM TO THE COMMON COUNCIL.

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 22, 2006 MEETING

** MRS. BRIGGS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS DISTRIBUTED.

** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE ABSTENTION (MR. MIKLAVE).

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Telesco
Telesco Secretarial Services

